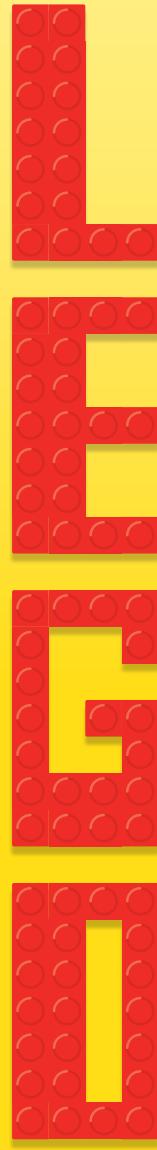


BLOCKBUSTERS



TOP 10

Largest commercially available LEGO® videogame sets

From clicks to bricks... Get your hands on the 10 biggest real-world official LEGO gaming sets available as of Jan 2023 (excluding expansion sets)

10

Sonic's Green Hill Zone Loop Challenge

Inspired by the opening level of Sonic's 1991 debut, this set captures the Blue Blur looping-the-loop in his quest to foil the evil Dr Robotnik's dastardly plans for the animals.



Set #: 76994
Pieces: 802

9

The Iron Golem Fortress

Help the Crystal and Golden Knights repel would-be invaders by building an impenetrable fort. Then rebuild this transformable set into a terrifying towering golem with massive moveable arms.

Set #: 21250
Pieces: 868



8

Sonic the Hedgehog – Green Hill Zone

Set #: 21331
Pieces: 1,125



LEGO revisits the *Sonic* scene that sits at No.10 in this list, but this time it's aimed at an older builder (18+). There are close to 50% more pieces.

7

Horizon Forbidden West: Tallneck

In its LEGO form, the iconic communication machine from the 2022 *Horizon Zero Dawn* sequel stands more than 34 cm (13.4 in) tall. With its long legs and even longer neck, it dwarfs the Minifigure of Aloy way below.

Set #: 76989
Pieces: 1,222



6

The Llama Village

Our second visit to a *Minecraft* community offers a challenging, character-based build. It includes a knight, a herder, a pillager – and a spitting llama that opens up to reveal six changeable rooms inside!

Set #: 21188
Pieces: 1,252



5 Super Mario 64 Question Mark Block

This brick-built cube opens to reveal instantly recognizable levels from 1996's *Super Mario 64*. You'll find Bob-omb Battlefield and Lethal Lava Land, plus some familiar faces, from Mario and Yoshi to Princess Peach.

Set #: 71395
Pieces: 2,064



4 Atari 2600

Build a brick replica of the **best-selling 2nd-generation console** (sales of 27.64 million). It comes with a joystick, three game cartridges - *Asteroids*, *Adventure* and *Centipede* - plus three game scenes to piece together.



Set #: 10306
Pieces: 2,532

3 Nintendo Entertainment System (NES)

Between 1985 and 2003, the **best-selling 3rd-generation console** sold 61.91 million units. Its LEGO counterpart comes with a retro-styled 1980s TV set that features an 8-bit Mario negotiating a side-scrolling landscape.

Set #: 71374
Pieces: 2,646



2 PAC-MAN Arcade

This LEGO take on the **best-selling arcade machine** (over 400,000 units sold) recreates a coin-op classic. It offers a mechanical maze that's operated by a side handle to simulate game play.



Set #: 10323
Pieces: 2,651

1 The Mighty Bowser

The Koopa King, released in 2022, towers over the rest of the Mushroom Kingdom at 32 cm (12.5 in) tall. The Super Mario boss has poseable hands, arms, legs and tail, and boasts a snapping jaw as well as a mouth that launches fireballs. "Bwah hah hah!"

Set #: 71411
Pieces: 2,807



Most concurrent players on Steam



PUBG: Battlegrounds

The epic battle royale *PUBG: Battlegrounds* recorded an all-time peak of 3,257,248 gamers playing at the same time on 13 Jan 2018. Neither *PUBG* nor any other game has managed to reach that lofty level on the PC gaming platform since, according to tracking website SteamDB. On 9 Sep 2018, *PUBG* became the **first game on Steam to maintain 1 million concurrent players for an entire year**.



INORITE!

- PlayerUnknown was the gaming tag of Ireland's Brendan Greene, the game's creator.
- Publisher Krafton decided to change the game title from *PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds* to *PUBG: Battlegrounds* in 2021.
- The game's popular phrase "Winner Winner Chicken Dinner" is thought to have originated among gamblers in the 1930s.

R N G
2,279,084

Number of gamers who played *PUBG: Battlegrounds* at the same time in Oct 2017, making it the **first game to reach 2 million concurrent players on Steam**.

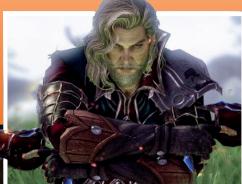
XP

Date: 2017
Developer: PUBG Studios
Publisher: Krafton

All aboard the Steam train

PUBG sits ahead of some formidable competitors on Steam. The game with the second-most-concurrent players as of Feb 2024 is newbie *Palworld* (Pocketpair, 2023, see pp.66 and 95) with a peak of 2.1 million players. First-person shooter *Counter-Strike 2* (Valve, 2023, above right) is next at 1.8 million, ahead of action RPG *Lost Ark* (Smilegate/Tripod Studio, 2019, left) on 1.3 million and

MOBA stalwart *Dota 2* (Valve, 2013, right) with 1.2 million. The only other game to top a million is *Cyberpunk 2077* (CD Projekt Red, 2020), which hit 1,054,388 concurrent gamers.



**XP**

Size: 3,050 items
Location: Spain
Estimated value:
 €300,000 (£259,563;
 \$336,642)

Largest collection of *Tomb Raider* memorabilia

Rodrigo Martín Santos



When the first Lara Croft game dropped in 1996 (*Tomb Raider*, Core Design), it made an instant fan of a nine-year-old Spanish boy who soon began seeking out memorabilia. During an official count two decades later, Rodrigo's collection had grown so large – to 3,050 distinct items – that it had to be split between two sites, in Madrid and Tenerife. Among his most prized possessions is an Arctic coat worn by Angelina Jolie in the 2001 movie, *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*. “It has been an adventure that has changed my life,” says Rodrigo. “It has taken me across the world.”



Largest collection of *Sonic* memorabilia

Barry Evans (USA) also has a collection of 3,050 items – but in his case, it's of *Sonic the Hedgehog* memorabilia. After 30 years of collecting, Barry's Blue-Blur hoard is now on display in a room that he's styled to look like "Yesterdays" – his favourite childhood arcade. His first ever item was a Sonic bubblegum container.

Memorabilia Collectormania

Game	Items	Collector
Digimon (left)	24,331	Ng Tze Ying (CHN)
Super Mario	5,441	Mitsugu Kikai (JPN)
Skylanders (right)	4,100	Christopher Desaliza (USA)
Final Fantasy	3,782	Tai-Ting Tseng (CHN)
<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>	3,050	Barry Evans (USA, see left)
Street Fighter (below)	2,723	Clarence Lim (CAN)
Silent Hill	342	Whitney Chavis (USA)



Best-selling MMO

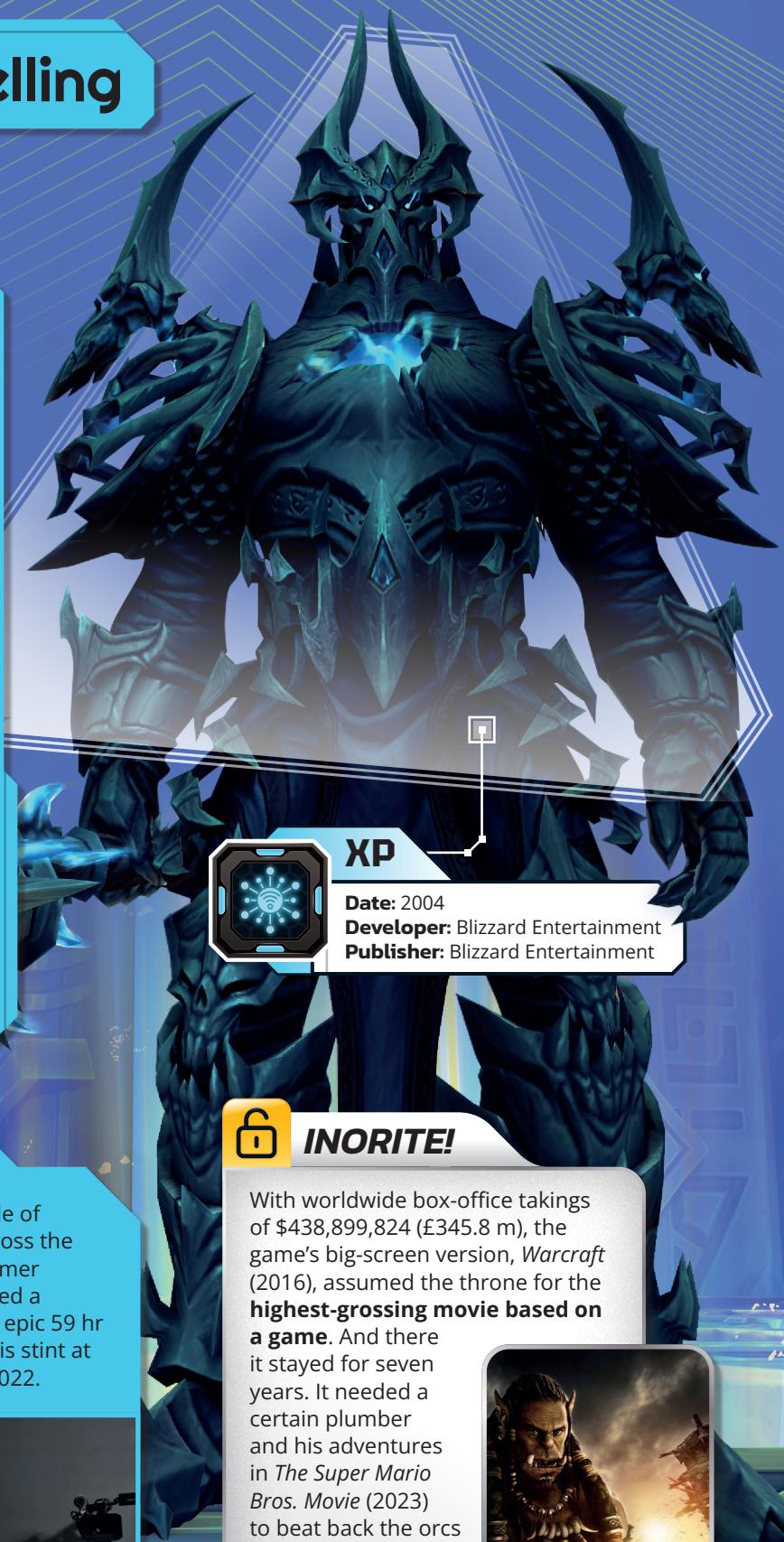
World of Warcraft

Blizzard's genre-defining massively multiplayer online RPG celebrates its 20th birthday in Nov 2024. Over the last two decades, WoW has seen dozens of rivals come and go, and recorded sales of more than 40.6 million copies, including its various expansions. This total includes 2020's *Shadowlands*, but the figures for the most recent title, *Dragonflight* (2022, below), have not yet been released.



Longest marathon playing WoW

Drawing on more than a decade of experience battling his way across the wilds of Azeroth, Hungarian gamer Barnabás Vujity-Zsolnay endured a *Warcraft* session that lasted an epic 59 hr 20 min 12 sec. He completed his stint at home in Budapest on 28 Sep 2022.



XP

Date: 2004

Developer: Blizzard Entertainment

Publisher: Blizzard Entertainment



INORITE!

With worldwide box-office takings of \$438,899,824 (£345.8 m), the game's big-screen version, *Warcraft* (2016), assumed the throne for the **highest-grossing movie based on a game**. And there it stayed for seven years. It needed a certain plumber and his adventures in *The Super Mario Bros. Movie* (2023) to beat back the orcs and the trolls. See pp.68–69 for our look at how films based on games have fared with moviegoers.





Fastest completion of Sonic the Hedgehog 2

On 25 Sep 2023, speedrunner eandis set a new record on the 1992 *Sonic* sequel. A back-and-forth had been going on with JoeyBaby69 before eandis broke the 13-min mark – and then lowered it further to 12 min 43 sec. The game is more than 30 years old, but there's life in this veteran hedgehog yet.



XP

Date: 1993–2016
Publisher:
Archie Comics
Issues: 290



Longest-running gaming comic character

• Pwn!

The Summer of Sonic convention started on 9 Aug 2008 in London and was the **first official fan event for a single game character**. With its staging in 2016, this magnet for Sonic-inspired artists, musicians and cosplayers became the **longest-running fan convention for a videogame character**.



Sonic the Hedgehog

The Blue Blur has appeared in comic-book form since at least Nov 1992, when he featured in a four-part mini series published by Archie Comics (USA). This was followed by a full launch in Jul 1993 of *Sonic the Hedgehog*, which ran for 290 issues until Dec 2016. Although the series was cancelled, another US firm, IDW Publishing, picked up the license and since 4 Apr 2018 has published a monthly comic under the same title. Artist Tyson Hesse, who has worked on both series, also animated cut scenes for the games *Sonic Mania* (2017) and *Sonic Origin* (2022), and is responsible for the look of our favourite blue hedgehog on the silver screen (see pp.68–69).



Most viewed game on Twitch

twitch

League of Legends

Riot Games' all-conquering MOBA had been watched 65.41 billion times as of 21 Nov 2023. That makes it the most popular game on what is the **most popular gaming-focused broadcasting service**.

Millions logged in for Worlds 2023 – a five-week, 22-team tournament that saw South Korea's T1 walk away with the \$445,000 (£357,000) first prize (see pp.114–15).



XP

Date: 2009

Developer: Riot Games
Publisher: Riot Games

Most concurrent viewers for a game on Twitch

LoL is, unsurprisingly, also the most popular single title on Twitch when it comes to peak viewership, with a record 3.11 million fans tuning in simultaneously for the Worlds finale on 6 Nov 2022. Figures this high are beaten only by special events, such as *Night of the Year 3*, organized by Ibai Llanos (right) – see how it compares on p.89.





Most Golden Joysticks won in a single year



Most Golden Joysticks won

The game that's taken home more Golden Joysticks than any other is *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* (CD Projekt RED, 2015), picking up 11 gongs between 2013 and 2016. This includes two "Most Wanted" awards, a five-trophy sweep of the major categories in 2015, and four wins in 2016 for its final expansion, *Blood and Wine*.

Baldur's Gate 3

The annual Golden Joystick Awards have been held in the UK since 1983. The game that's had the best single night in the event's history is the third instalment of Larian's *Dungeons & Dragons*-set *Baldur's Gate* series, with seven wins in 2023.



XP

Date: 2023

Developer: Larian Studios
Publisher: Larian Studios

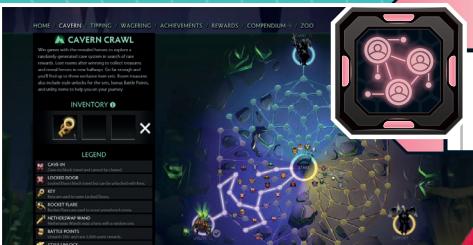
Pwn!

Want to chat with the wildlife in Faerûn? Then cast the "Speak with Animals" spell on yourself. This allows you to talk to non-hostile animals – you'll not only learn a lot, it's also a lot of fun!

!

Largest esports team for people with disabilities

PermaStunned Gaming



XP

Founded: 2019
Members: 37
X: PermaStunnedG



"It always bothered me people with disabilities were underrepresented in the professional Dota 2 scene."



Cristal1337, aka Alexander Nathan

In Jan 2019, streamer Alexander Nathan (NLD) set out to build a *Dota 2* team of people with disabilities like him. Within days, Nathan had the four teammates he was looking for, but it didn't stop there. Five years later, that *Dota 2* team has evolved into a 37-member esports collective "made from gamers with disabilities, for gamers with disabilities". In addition to competing in tournaments for games as diverse as *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive* (Valve, 2012), *Call of Duty* (Activision, 2003) and *Tekken* (Bandai Namco, 1994), PermaStunned advocates for the estimated 400 million disabled gamers worldwide.

Fastest-growing non-mobile game



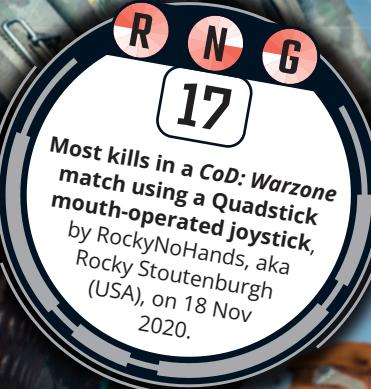
Mobile battle royale

On 21 Mar 2024 – two years after it was announced – Activision released *Call of Duty: Warzone Mobile*. More than 50 million people pre-registered for this much-anticipated free-to-play FPS, which deployed with the fan-favourite map Verdansk. The battle-royale mode supports 120 players, up from the 100 available on the OG console and PC version.

Call of Duty: Warzone

Within three days of its launch on 10 Mar 2020, Activision's free-to-play battle royale had gathered over 15 million gamers. Players, known in-game as Operators, leapt at the chance to take up arms. *Warzone* cut down its rivals on the way to topping 50 million downloads within the month and more than 100 million by

Apr 2021. For many people, it was their go-to game during the COVID-19 lockdowns.



XP

Date: 2020
Developer: Raven Software/
Infinity Ward
Publisher: Activision



Most PlayStation trophies won

! **ikemenzi**

Japanese gamer Kenji "ikemenzi" Ito had won an incredible 287,668 PlayStation trophies as of 12 Apr 2024 – an average of 73.73 trophies each day! That put him 23,740 ahead of his nearest competitor.

ikemenzi also holds the record for winning the **most bronze** trophies (139,410). He previously held the **most gold**, **silver** and **platinum** records – titles since claimed by dav1d_123 (CAN) with 81,174 and 10,123 respectively.

PS Trophy Leaderboard	
ikemenzi (JPN)	287,668
dav1d_123 (CAN)	264,823
caro3c-gabber9 (FRA)	253,725
tusman (CHE)	248,543
MarCCeoN (AUT)	245,454

PSNProfiles.com, as of 23 Apr 2024

• Pwn!

As any PlayStation gamer will know, some platinum trophies are easier to win than others. One of the less tricky paths to platinum is to complete *SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom – Rehydrated* (Purple Lamp Studios, 2020). It only takes about 15 hours and is a whole lot of fun to play! There are 33 trophies in total.

XP

Tag: Ikemenzi
Games played: 18,513
World rank: 3

R N G
18,513

Number of PlayStation games ikemenzi has played. He has scooped 723 Ultra Rare trophies and 2,039 Very Rare ones.





Best-selling strategy game for PC

The enduringly popular real-time strategy *StarCraft* (Blizzard, 1998) has sold more than 11 million copies. The game's three carefully balanced factions and complex gameplay earned it a dedicated multiplayer community, and it remains a staple of esports events to this day.

Highest-earning female esports player

Sasha "Scarlett" Hostyn



Sasha "Scarlett" Hostyn (CAN) had earned \$465,550 (£371,025) in prize money as of 12 Apr 2024, according to Esports Earnings. The winnings come almost exclusively from *StarCraft II: Wings of Liberty* (Blizzard, 2010), though Scarlett has played a few *StarCraft: Remastered* (Blizzard, 2017) events. Her biggest prize – \$50,000 (£35,848) – came in 2018, when she won the Intel Extreme Masters (inset), an international Olympics-affiliated *StarCraft II* competition. (Turn to p.63 to find out who the overall **highest-earning esports player** is.)


XP

Tag: Scarlett
Nickname: Queen of Blades
Team: Shopify Rebellion



Highest-earning Female esports players

Player	Earnings
Sasha "Scarlett" Hostyn (CAN)	\$465,550 (£371,025)
Xiao Meng "Liooon" Li (CHN)	\$241,510 (£189,404)
Ksenia "vilga" Klyuenkova (RUS)	\$122,693 (£96,822)
Katherine "Mystik" Gunn (USA)	\$122,550 (£96,719)
Julia "Juliano" Kiran (SWE)	\$96,304 (£76,018)

EsportsEarnings.com, as of 4 Jan 2024

Esports influencer

The New Yorker called Scarlett "the most accomplished woman in esports" while *Forbes* magazine placed her at No.24 on their list of "most powerful women in international sports" – and that's not just esports but *all* sports! Scarlett appears to take the fame and adulation in her stride. "Mostly, success for me would be about being happy," she said.